



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR'S HMONG RESETTLEMENT ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

705 S. 24TH AVE., WAUSAU (CHILDREN'S SERVICE SOCIETY OFFICE)
Friday, August 20, 2004 (10:00 AM to 2:00 PM)

Members Present (18): Kaying Xiong (Chair), Andrew Benedetto, Ann Wondergem, Bee Xiong, ChaSong Yang, Cheryl McIlquham, Christa Xiong, Dan Idzikowski, Joe Vang, Ker Vang, Mary Ann Jackson, Melissa Borth, Nell Anderson, Peter Yang, Phyllis Birmingham, Susan Gundlach, Thai Vue, Yee Moua.

Others, including Guest Speakers (14): Carolyn Brady (UW River Falls), Janet Jenkins (DATCP), Judy Wilcox (Commerce), Seree Weroha (DPI), Brenda Aphayrath (DPI), Bob Grusvick (DOC), Mike Williams (DOC), Mark F. (DOC), Leticia Smith-Evans (Governor's Office), Amy Johnson (Governor's Office-D.C), Karen Fink (U.S. DHHS), Susan Levy (DWD), Ying Lee (DWD), Chris Gunst (WHEDA).

Members Not Present (9): Bounngning Her, Hoyu Sayaovong, Jim Schramm, John Medinger, Sharon Hunter, Shoua Xiong, Shwaw Vang, ThaiYing Lee, Yang Max Kue.

Welcome and Introductions - Kaying Xiong (Chair)

Kaying gave a welcome and thank you to members of the Task Force for their work and to other department representatives for their participation. She also thanked Andrew Benedetto for hosting, as well as Ying and Sue for their help in arranging meetings and conference calls for the Task Force and subcommittees.

Updates - Susan Levy

Actual Number of Hmong Arrivals To Date - As of July 2004, a total of 389 refugees had arrived in Wisconsin. Of this 389, 176 of them were recent Hmong arrivals in June and July. Sue was very pleased to have the chance to meet several of the first Hmong families in Madison at a reception in July at United Refugee Services. She was also delighted to learn that a family in Manitowoc was employed two weeks after arrival.

- **W-2 Funding** - Progress has been made: \$1 million was allocated to W-2 agencies in the impacted communities for benefits and/or services to the new group. A funding chart was provided at the previous meeting of the Task Force. W-2 agencies facing budget shortfalls now apply for additional funds (which included an estimate of the needs for the Hmong population) to administer their programs. A guideline will be provided and their requests must be provided to DWD by September 3, 2004.

Collaboration - DWD has recently issued an Administrator's Memo to W-2 agencies, Refugee E & T providers and Volags (resettlement agencies) to help ensure that all parties collaborate to provide effective services to the new arrivals. The three principal parties are to sit down to plan together and talk about who's doing what to the extent possible.

Unanticipated Arrivals Grant - DWD applied and received a notice of award from the U.S. DHHS for \$667,500. In addition, Wisconsin received awards directly from DHHS, which were distributed to the following agencies:

- Catholic Charities of La Crosse for \$178,170;
- United Refugee Services of Wisconsin in Madison \$130,000;
- International Institute of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and Catholic Charities of Milwaukee \$217,135.

DWD has allocated its funding to communities where there is no award directly from DHHS. These included five consortia currently under contracts with DWD. A funding allocation chart was included in the handout packet. The funding is to provide E&T services to the new arrivals with specific performance outcomes for job placements, number of grant terminations and reductions. Of this \$667,500 - \$100,000 was geared toward ESL. For this, each agency will need to address the ESL issues by identifying resources that are currently available and how these new funds will address the critical gaps.

A plan addressing the unmet needs is to be submitted to DWD/Immigrant Integration Section by September 24, 2004. The award is a 16 month-budget, effective August 1, 2004 to December 21, 2005. Agencies receiving funds will be receiving a contract amendment from DWD, which took effect August 1, so agencies could begin spending and hiring new staff now.

Fulbright Updates – Seree Weroha, Ph.D., and Brenda Aphayrath, DPI
DPI received a Fulbright grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a study seminar to Laos and Thailand this summer (from June 18 – July 23). The grant provided an opportunity for 21 Wisconsin teachers and educators to visit Wat Tham Krabok in Thailand. Below are some of the highlights from their PowerPoint presentation:

Employment opportunity and small business:

- 10% of population is involved in small business
- 10% specialize in needlework and handiwork
- 40% are involved in labor work outside of Wat Thamkrabok (Construction sites, Concrete work, Plantation fields, Rock Quarries, etc.)
- 40% are unemployed. They do, however, receive some financial support from families in the United States.

Exposure to technology:

- Cell phones
- VCRs
- Radios
- Internet use and video games

60% of Wat Thamkrabok's population are 18 years of age or younger:

- 50% of the children are in school
- 50% can't afford school

- 37% of adults have formal education
- Higher level of literacy than earlier Hmong refugees (about 80%)

Three ways children receive an education:

- Thai school outside of Wat Thamkrabok
- Hmong school inside the community
- Home schooling

The entire curriculum is taught in Thai. They attend school from grades 1-9. There are no opportunities for higher education. Their curriculum is developed by the Ministry of Education and includes the following areas:

- Thai language
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Art
- Health and Physical Education
- Buddhist religion
- Work, career, and technology
- Some English instruction

Areas of resettlement in the United States:

- 34% California
- 33% Minnesota
- 21% Wisconsin
- 2% North Carolina
- Others to Ohio, Rhode Island, Michigan, Oregon and Washington State

Health concerns:

- Respiratory illness
- TB
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Protein malnutrition
- No prenatal care
- pregnant women anemic
- many teen pregnancies
- many women over 40 giving birth

Cultural orientation:

- One week/ 25 hour session

- The United States of America
- Pre-Arrival Processing
- Application for Social Security
- Housing (lease, landlord, and tenant)
- Utility Cost
- Resources for finding a job (resume, job application, tips for success, job ladder, etc)
- Pay Statement and Deductions
- Monthly Expenses
- Education for Children and Adults
- Health Care Options
- Legal Status
- Law in the U.S.
- Cultural Adjustment and How to Adapt
- Traveling

Housing Resources - Department of Commerce & WHEDA

Judy Wilcox, Section Chief, Housing/Commerce provided extensive information on state housing programs. Housing dollars for CDBG / HOME are administered by the Department of Commerce for the balance of state, and by local community development organizations in urban entitlement communities.

Commerce programs include:

Homeless:

- State shelter subsidy (emergency housing in shelter facilities or through short-term vouchers)
- \$1.13 million is provided annually for 38 agencies
- Hmong represent <1% of those who use homeless shelters

State Transitional Housing Program funds are provided through an application that combines THP with the HUD Emergency Shelter Grant Program. In the most recent round of funding 18 programs were awarded funds to serve homeless individuals and families for a period of up to two years.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD Block grant for Emergency Shelter Grant Program:

- Non profit organizations and municipalities may apply
- Approximately \$2 million (federal \$)
- Funded approximately 78 programs, 108 agencies

Through the Prevention category, funds for 1st months rent, security deposit are available for persons leaving shelter or transitional housing or to prevent homelessness for persons facing eviction or foreclosure.

In the Essential Services Category funds are available for case management and longer term transitional housing services.

HOME Program:

- \$13 million (federal) for non-entitlement communities for homeowner / buyer assistance program, rental housing development, homeowner rehabilitation program and tenant-based rental assistance.
- Consolidated plan is required. A 5-year plan is due to HUD at the end of December. Agencies are encouraged to send comments concerning housing needs and priorities for inclusion in that Plan.
- Need to fill out the blue form (the 5-Year Consolidated Plan Initiative Survey Questions)
- People must be signed up as soon as possible (waiting lists exist in every community)
- Considering converting multi family homes back into large family housing using HOME rehabilitation funds
- ADVOCAP and CAP Services are participating agencies

Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) is a state-funded program that provides funding for rental assistance, housing counseling and for first time homebuyer programs.

Wisconsin Service Point is a web-based homeless management information system to improve the ability to identify the demographic and service needs of the homeless population.

WI Front Door (new implementation) is a web-based resource database that will be available to providers, individuals, tenants, landlords, and property managers for information on available rental units and other information related to housing needs and services. The program has two components:

1. Listing of community services available (e.g. food bank, social services, etc.);
2. A comprehensive affordable housing inventory.

Fresh Start (12 programs) - administered through the Department of Commerce. The program is a hands-on construction-related training program. The purpose is to help prepare at-risk youth to become productive citizens. The Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association is a participating agency with remarkable results. Judy Wilcox also brought a comprehensive package of information on housing to the Task Force.

Chris Gunst, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

Chris previously sent a list of housing contacts and resources to all Task Force Members. Several expressed appreciation.

WHEDA administers state housing programs with state and federal funds.

WHEDA is working with HUD to see if they can identify housing in foreclosure which could be transferred to the local housing authority, interest free for a period of time to be used for rental housing. Once the need was met, the housing could be sold.

There are currently 20-30 homes in foreclosure with WHEDA, and HUD may have additional properties.

One reason for the reduction in the availability of housing subsidies is that the HUD subsidy budget has remained constant while rent prices have gone up. The money will not go as far.

WHEDA is translating its homebuyer information into Hmong. It is also working on the translation of model leases into Hmong.

Cabinet, Departments and Congressional Updates

Carolyn Brady, Admissions/Multicultural Outreach, UW-River Falls - They have a substantial refugee population. They have geared up toward pre-college programming and have new publications in Hmong on preparations for college.

Janet Jenkins, Administrator, Division of Consumer Protection, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) - The Division administers many of the consumer protection laws and practices, home improvements laws, and landlord-tenant laws. Probably the most interesting to the Task Force would be the landlord-tenant laws. The Division would like to find out from the Task Force how best they could provide services to the newly arriving and current refugee population. Several of the most requested brochures and fact sheets, along with a listing of other publications were distributed to members of the Task Force. Ms. Jenkins asked for suggestions on which ones would be most useful to translate.

Bob Grusvick, Mike Williams, and Mark F., Department of Corrections - Corrections is a small piece of a huge criminal justice system and many efforts have to be done at the local level. Resettlement is a major task and hopefully in the process, we don't see people end up into the criminal system. But in reality, there are individuals in the system and it is important to take proactive approaches to minimize the situation. They have and will be working closely with refugee agencies and leaders to learn about the refugee culture to better serve the new population.

Amy Johnson, Office of Governor Doyle (D.C.)

- Try to get \$10 million for '05. Will share with other key states with new Hmong resettlement.

Committee Reports and Feedback

All Committees, except the Family Issues Committee, have met via phone conference calls. As a result, the Chair of each Committee gave a preliminary report to the Task Force. An electronic copy of the report of each committee is attached.

Some of the specific items to be noted included:

Education

- More Hmong teachers are needed
- There are gaps-math/content
- Need to get new arrival data to DPI to administer/transfer of service funds

Mary Ann (ESL)

- Family literacy, funding limited (estimated \$1.3 million needed for services to the new population).
- Need to review W-2 and Unanticipated Arrivals Grant for ESL

Mental Health

- Need a screening tool
- Mental health videos developed by HND (Hmong National Development) are available. There is a need to talk about how to use them widely.

Housing and Transportation

- Need DOT and WISCAP representatives on the committee
- Need emergency assistance grant
- Do communications to MAAs/Volags on housing resources, safety materials in

Hmong

Health

- Need to have Savitri Tsering of DHFS on the Committee
- Timing TB testing
- New refugees have health records in Thai
- AHS-HMO enrollments

Next Steps

Kaying's PowerPoint: Kaying gave a review of the Task Force charge, assignments for the Committees, as well as an overview of the activities to date and next steps in the process. She also provided additional thoughts for a final report for the works of the Task Force. A copy of her presentation is also attached.

Kaying indicated that all Committees use the format provided by the Mental Health Committee when developing their reports for the Task Force.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on October 13th, in Madison, at the State Capitol, Room 411 South. (Same room as the July 21st meeting.)

The meeting time and agenda will be distributed soon.

Attachments